

## **II. Demand for Outdoor Recreation**

The 2002-2007 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) is the eighth in a series of national surveys started in 1960 by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and now coordinated by the USDA Forest Service. The survey was accomplished by interviewing approximately 90,000 Americans aged 16 and over in random-digit-dialing telephone samplings. In 2007, the U.S. Forest Service prepared an analysis of responses to the NSRE for residents from North Carolina.

The NSRE has yielded just fewer than 3,000 total surveys for North Carolina during this period. The primary purpose of the NSRE and was to learn about approximately 85 specific outdoor recreation activities of people aged 16 and over in the United States. Questions from the NSRE broadly address areas such as outdoor recreation participation, demographics, household structure, lifestyles, environmental attitudes, natural resource values, constraints to participation, and attitudes toward management policies.

### **Survey Results**

The first section presents of the 10 most popular outdoor recreation activities by percent participating and number of participants. By far the most popular activity is walking for pleasure, with 82 percent of state residents participating. Roughly three-quarters of the population have outdoor family gatherings at least once last year, and almost two-thirds garden or landscape for pleasure. Driving for pleasure is done by 58.2 percent of the population, while 57 percent view/photograph natural scenery. Almost 53 percent of state residents visit nature centers and go sightseeing.

Half of the population goes on picnics, while less than half attend outdoor sports events. Rounding out the top ten, 44.2 percent of residents visit a beach at least once per year (Figure 2.1).

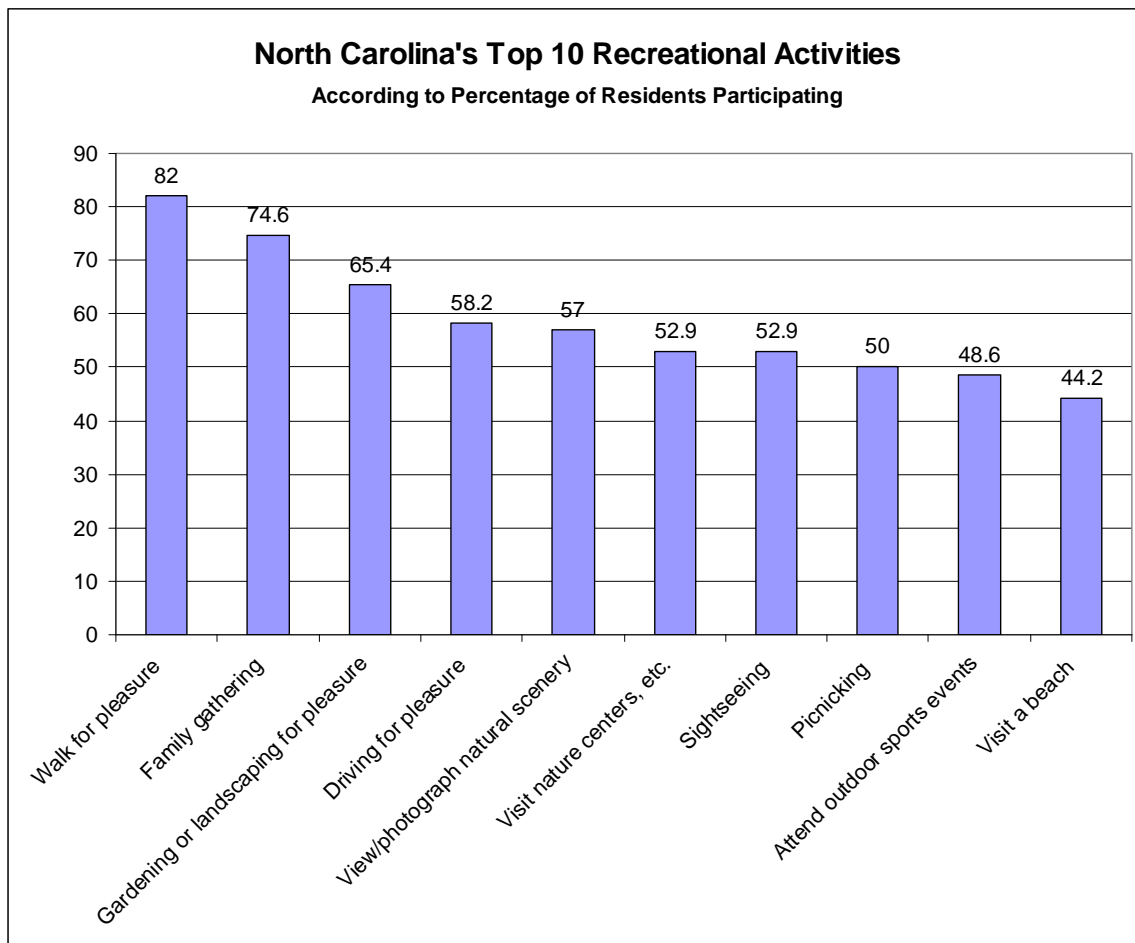


Figure 2.1: The 10 most popular Outdoor Recreation Activities for North Carolina residents

### Activity Groups and Activities for North Carolina Residents

One of the most important results of the NSRE is the division of the population into groups with similar recreation interests and setting types. Very often people that share an interest in one recreation activity or settings also share interests in others.

#### ***Nature Based Land Activities***

Visiting wilderness areas is the most popular nature-based land activity (29.8 percent) in the state of North Carolina. Hiking is also a popular activity (29.7 percent), with almost a third of state residents indicating participation within the last year. Visiting a farm or agricultural setting continues to be a popular activity with just under a third of residents doing this within the last year. Just over 20 percent of state residents also indicate an interest in driving off-road and

developed camping. The somewhat specialized, technical outdoor pursuits usually requiring special gear like rock climbing and mountain climbing are among the least popular nature-based land activities with 5 percent or less participating.

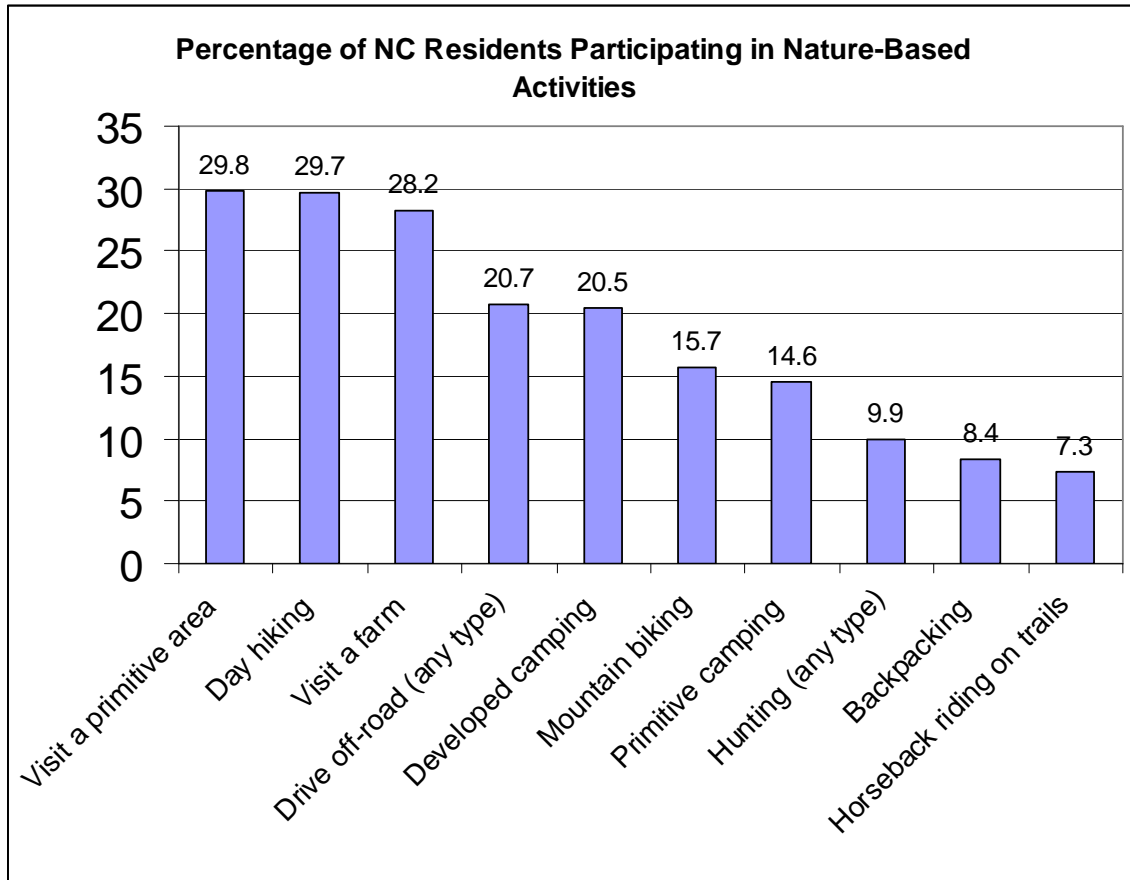


Figure 2.2: North Carolina resident participation in Nature-Based Land activities

### ***Developed Setting Activities***

Developed Setting outdoor recreation is by far the most popular form of recreation in North Carolina. More residents indicated participation in walking for pleasure (82 percent ) and outdoor family gatherings (74.6 percent) than in any other overall activity. Other activities, such as gardening or landscaping (65.4 percent) or driving for pleasure (58.2 percent) are also favorites with North Carolina residents.

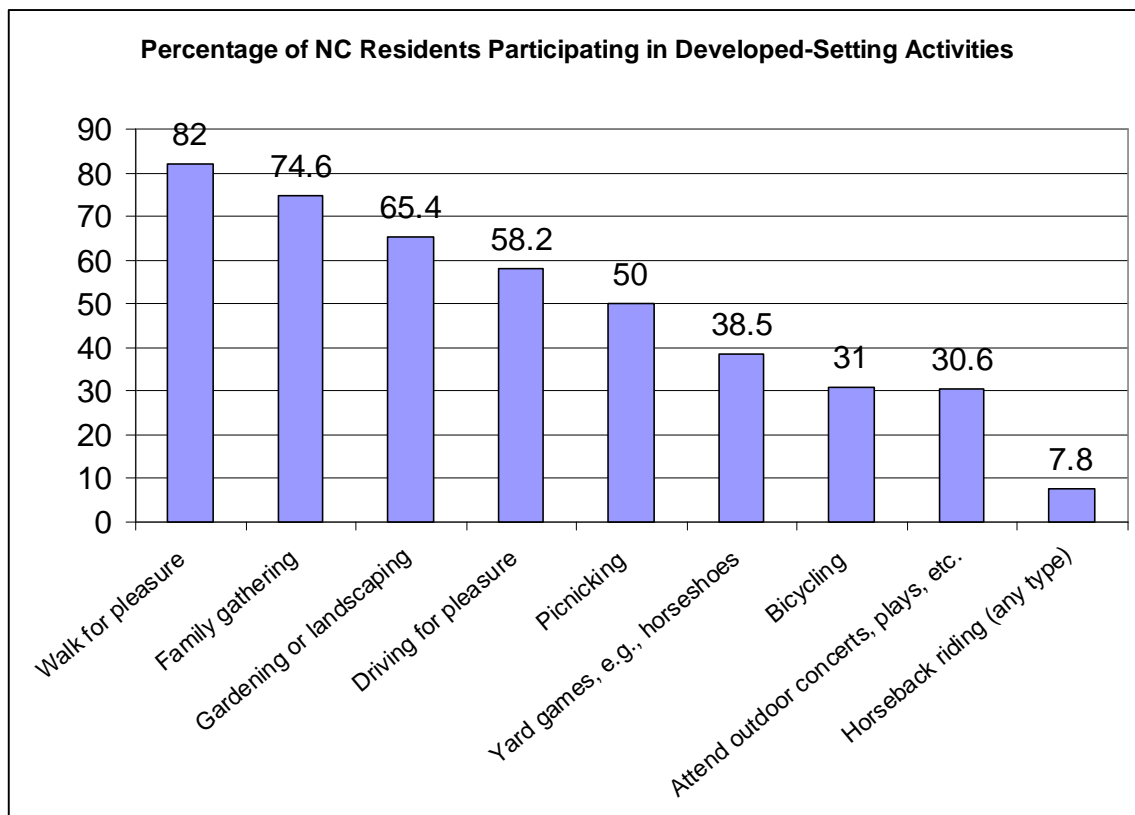


Figure 2.3: North Carolina resident participation in Developed-Setting Land activities

## Water Based Activities

Figure 2.3 shows that the most popular water based activity in North Carolina is visiting a beach. Roughly 45 percent of state residents report visiting a beach at least once per year. Almost equal numbers of residents participate in swimming in an outdoor pool (39.9 percent) and swimming in lakes, streams, etc (39.7 percent), making these the second and third most popular activities. Boating of any type is another popular activity with 31 percent of state residents participating. Other types of boating include motorboating (22.5percent), rafting (9.3 percent), canoeing (6.7 percent), sailing (3.7 percent), kayaking (3.1 percent), and rowing (2.5 percent). Fishing is a popular water based activity and is broken into several categories. State residents participate in freshwater fishing (30.9 percent), followed by warmwater fishing (25.9 percent), saltwater fishing (17 percent), and coldwater fishing (11.5 percent).

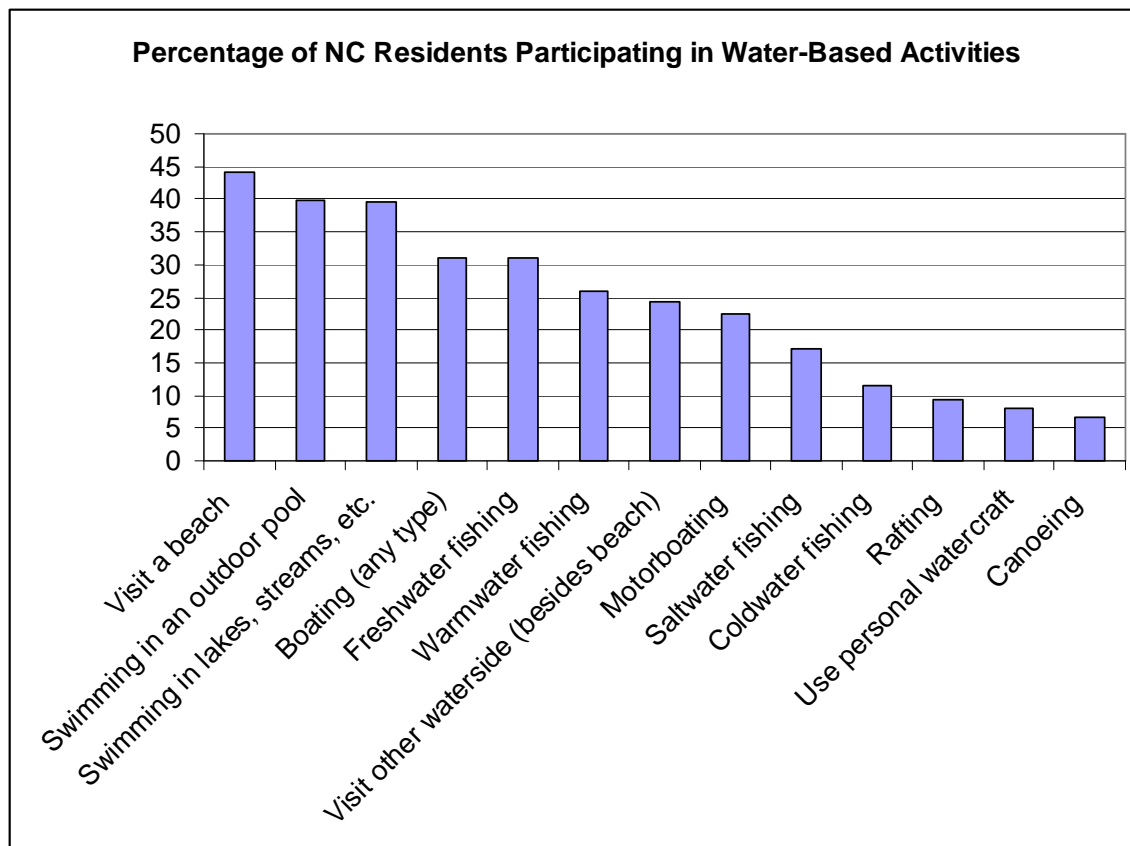


Figure 2.4: North Carolina resident participation in Water-Based activities

### ***Team Sports Activities***

The most popular team related outdoor sport for North Carolina residents is attending an outdoor sports event, with almost 50 percent of residents participating. Soccer, volleyball, and softball played outdoors is reported played by 9 percent of state residents. Just under 9 percent of residents play basketball outdoors. The two least popular outdoor sports are football (4.2 percent) and baseball (3.5 percent).

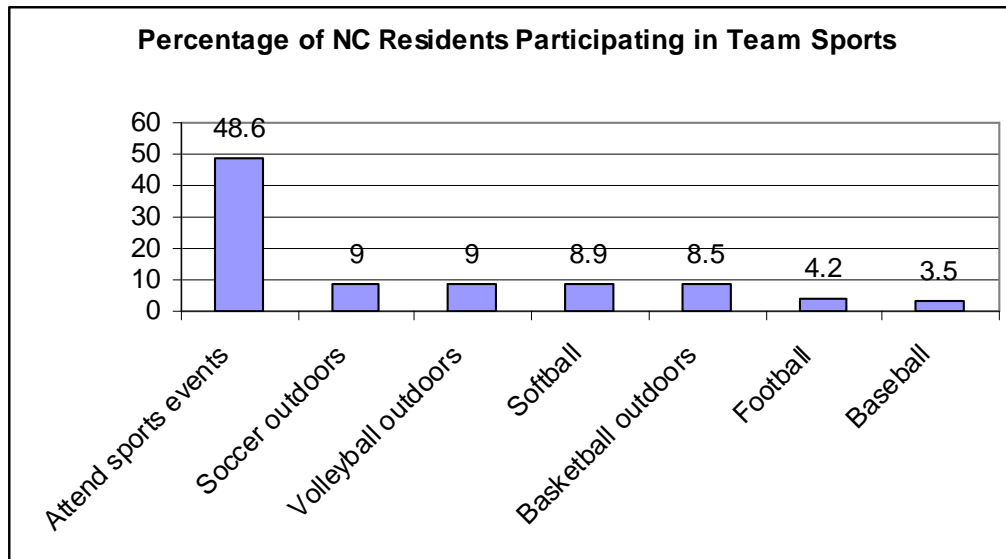


Figure 2.5: North Carolina resident participation in Team Sports activities

### ***Viewing / Learning Activities***

Table 3.5 presents resident participation in viewing and learning activities. The most popular viewing and learning activity is view/photograph natural scenery with 57 percent of North Carolina residents participating. The next two most popular activities are visiting nature centers and similar areas and sightseeing, each having 52.9 percent of residents participating. Visiting historic sites is another popular activity enjoyed by 43.1 percent of North Carolina residents, while only 18 percent of residents visit prehistoric/archeological sites. Many residents also enjoy viewing and photography a variety of objects including the following: other wildlife (43 percent); wildflowers, trees, etc. (41 percent); birds (34 percent); and fish (26.5 percent). Almost a quarter of North Carolina residents report gathering mushrooms and berries at least once a year. Less than 5 percent of residents go caving at least once a year, making it the least popular viewing/learning activity.

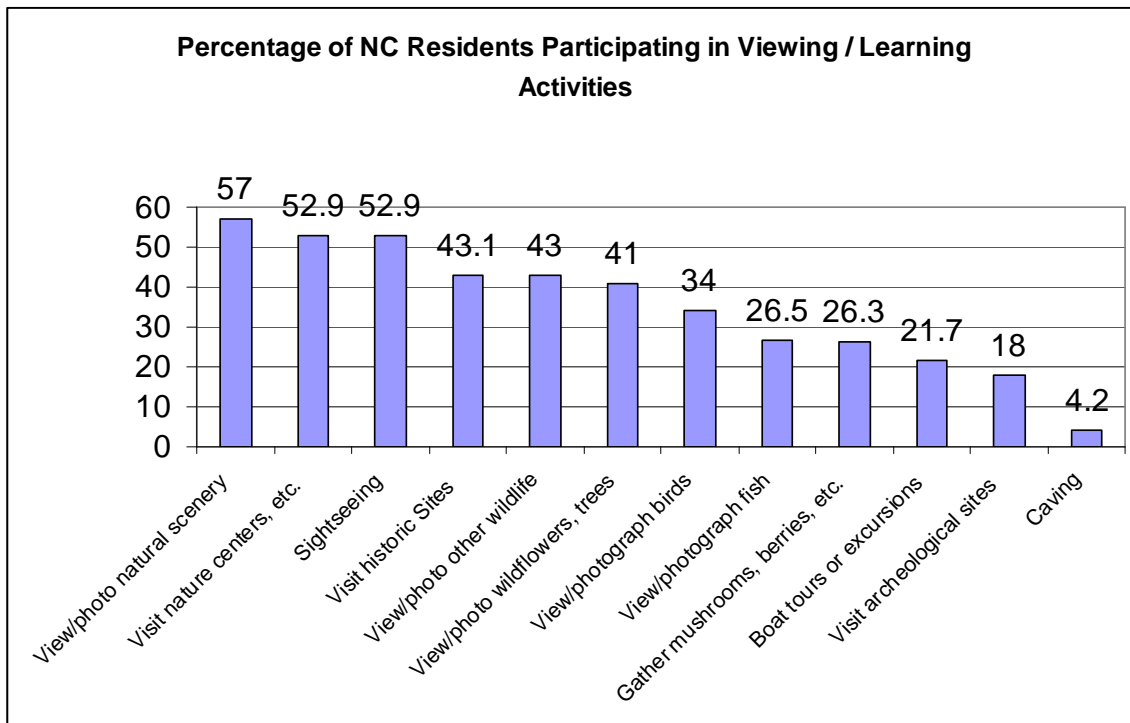


Figure 2.6: North Carolina resident participation in Viewing/Learning activities

### ***Individual Outdoor Sports Activities***

Less than one-third of North Carolina residents reported running or jogging once within the last year, making it the most popular individual outdoor sport. Outdoors tennis participants constitute 14.8 percent of the population, while almost 14 percent of residents have golfed within the last year. Less than 10 percent participated in inline skating, and only 3.1 percent played handball or racquetball outdoors, making it the least popular sport (Figure 2.7).

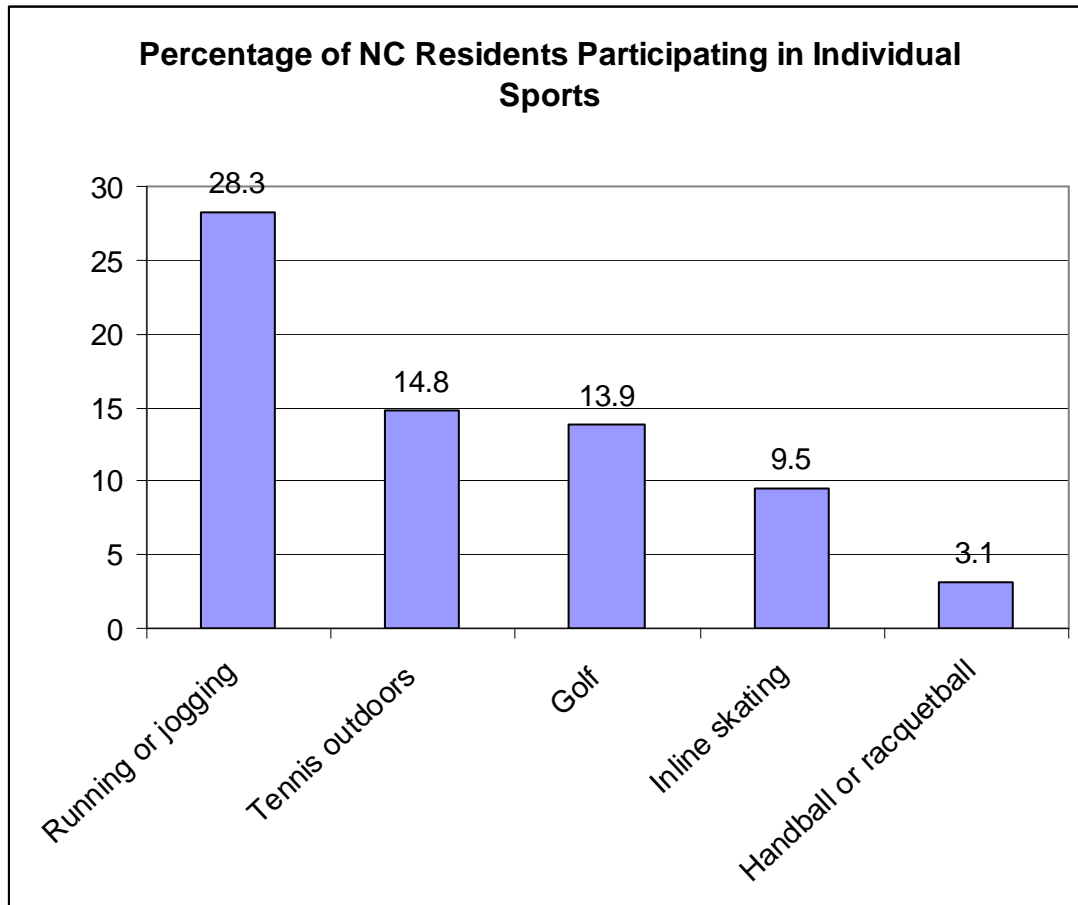


Figure 2.7: North Carolina resident participation in Individual Outdoor Sports activities



### ***Snow and Ice Based Activities***

Figure 2.8 shows that less than 20 percent of North Carolina residents participate in snow and ice based activities. Of those participating, the most popular snow and ice based activity in the state is sledding (8 percent). Downhill skiing is the second most popular activity with 6.1 percent of state residents participating, followed by snowboarding with 3.1 percent participation. Ice skating outdoors is done by 2.1 percent of the population, while 1.5 percent of residents snowmobile. Cross country skiing is the least popular activity with 1 percent participation.

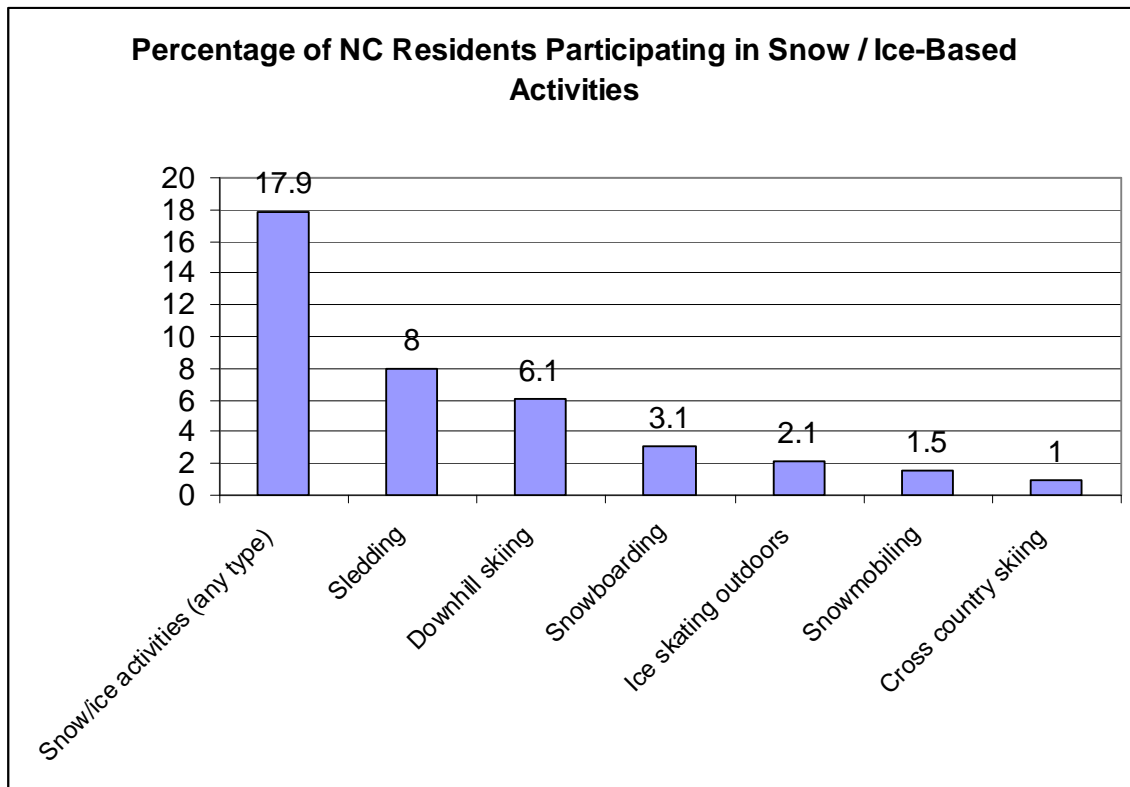


Figure 2.8: North Carolina resident participation in Snow and Ice-Based activities

The NSRE found that over 97 percent of Americans age 16 and over participated in at least one of the 80 recreation activities surveyed during the year prior to their interview. While reasons for participation are varied – for exercise and health, as part of a vacation, for team or individual competition, or just for fun – it is obvious that demand for outdoor recreation is high (Table 2.1).

Percentage of NC Residents Participating in Outdoor Recreation Activities					
Rank	Activity	Percent	Rank	Activity	Percent
1	Walk for pleasure	82	41	Coldwater fishing	11.5
2	Family gathering	74.6	42	Hunting (any type)	9.9
3	Gardening or landscaping	65.4	43	Inline skating	9.5
4	Driving for pleasure	58.2	44	Rafting	9.3
5	View/photo natural scenery	57	45	Soccer outdoors	9
6	Visit nature centers, etc.	52.9	46	Volleyball outdoors	9
7	Sightseeing	52.9	47	Softball	8.9
8	Picnicking	50	48	Basketball outdoors	8.5
9	Attend sports events	48.6	49	Backpacking	8.4
10	Visit a beach	44.2	50	Use personal watercraft	8
11	Visit historic Sites	43.1	51	Sledding	8
12	View/photo other wildlife	43	52	Horseback riding (any type)	7.8
13	View/photo wildflowers, trees	41	53	Horseback riding on trails	7.3
14	Swimming in an outdoor pool	39.9	54	Big game hunting	7.2
15	Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	39.7	55	Canoeing	6.7
16	Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	38.5	56	Small Game hunting	6.4
17	View/photograph birds	34	57	Waterskiing	6.3
18	Bicycling	31	58	Downhill skiing	6.1
19	Boating (any type)	31	59	Mountain climbing	5.3
20	Freshwater fishing	30.9	60	Football	4.2
21	Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	30.6	61	Caving	4.2
22	Visit a primitive area	29.8	62	Snorkeling	4.1
23	Day hiking	29.7	63	Sailing	3.7
24	Running or jogging	28.3	64	Baseball	3.5
25	Visit a farm	28.2	65	Anadromous fishing	3.1
26	View/photograph fish	26.5	66	Kayaking	3.1
27	Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	26.3	67	Handball or racquetball	3.1
28	Warmwater fishing	25.9	68	Snowboarding	3.1
29	Visit other waterside (not a beach)	24.4	69	Orienteering	3
30	Motorboating	22.5	70	Rowing	2.5
31	Boat tours or excursions	21.7	71	Rock climbing	2.3
32	Drive off-road (any type)	20.7	72	Ice skating outdoors	2.1
33	Developed camping	20.5	73	Surfing	1.8
34	Visit archeological sites	18	74	Migratory bird hunting	1.7
35	Snow/ice activities (any type)	17.9	75	Snowmobiling	1.5
36	Saltwater fishing	17	76	Scuba diving	1
37	Mountain biking	15.7	77	Cross country skiing	1
38	Tennis outdoors	14.8	78	Windsurfing	0.5
39	Primitive camping	14.6	79	Snowshoeing	0.2
40	Golf	13.9	80	Ice fishing	0

Table 2.1: Percentage of NC Residents Participating in Outdoor Recreation Activities